

Excessive Caffeine Intake**Definition/
cut-off value**

Routine intake of ≥ 3 cups of coffee, or the caffeine equivalent from other caffeine-containing beverages.

**Participant
category and
priority level****Category****Priority**

Breastfeeding Women

IV

Justification

Caffeine consumed by the mother is transferred into breast milk. The equivalent amount of caffeine found in modest amounts of regular coffee daily is unlikely to have a deleterious effect on the infant. When a mother ingests larger amounts of caffeine (the equivalent of 6 or more cups of coffee a day), caffeine can accumulate in the infant, causing wakefulness, hyperactivity, or irritability. Evidence from a study in Costa Rica showed that maternal consumption of 3 or more cups of coffee daily can affect iron concentrations in milk and infant iron status at one month of age, but this nutritional effect is probably due to compounds in coffee other than caffeine; i.e., decaffeinated beverages of the same type would be likely to have the same effect.

**Clarifications/
Guidelines**

Before assigning this risk code, be sure diet has been accurately assessed and documented on the diet/health history form.

References

1. Institute of Medicine: Nutrition During Lactation; 1991; pp. 15, and 176.
2. Lawrence, R: Breastfeeding - A Guide for the Medical Profession; 1994;p. 342.
3. Williams, S.: Nutrition and Diet Therapy; 1993; p. A-67.